

## ATTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

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### ABSTRACT

*Eighty eight college students, half male and half female, were requested to rate stories depicting an actor engaging in immoral behaviors in terms of the actor's responsibility for the behavior and the negativity of behavior. Three variables were manipulated in the stories : sex of the actor, sex-type of behavior, and the motive for the behavior. The results showed that when the motive of behavior was for gain, subjects evaluated the behavior more negatively than when the motive was for avoiding loss. The motive of behavior was also found to interact with the sex-type of behavior. Male-typed behaviors were evaluated more negatively under the gain motive, while female-typed behaviors were evaluated equally negative in both motive conditions. Subjects with high achievement motivation perceived the immoral behavior more negatively as compared to the low achievement motivation subjects. Female actors tended to be rated more negatively than male actors.*

From Heider's (1958) 'naive analysis of action', attribution theory has evolved as a series of propositions that describe the process by which a person attributes causality for events that occur in his life, including his own actions and actions taken by others. Heider (1958) contends that people behave very much like quasi-scientists. People observe an event and then attempt to infer the relation between various effects and possible causes. The basis of inference, according to Heider, focuses on whether the behavior is caused by forces in the situation surrounding the actor (external factors) or the actor's personal dispositions (internal factors). People make an external attribution if the basis of inference is in the forces of the situation surrounding the actor. In this case, an observer feels most people would behave in the same way as the actor if they were in the same situation. By contrast, people adopt an internal attribution if the basis of inference is the actor's personal dispositions. In an internal attribution, the observer assigns the actor's behavior than situa-

tional forces. In this case, the observer does not expect most people would behave in the same way as the actor if they were in the same situation. Moreover, in making an internal attribution the observer expects the actor tend to engage in similar conduct in the future regardless of situational factors surrounding the behavior, while in making external attribution the observer does not have such an expectation.

There are several things which determine whether the causes of behavior are attributed to internal or external factors. Kelley (1972) suggests that a high consensus behavior in which most people would behave in the same way in responding to a situation is attributed to external factors. Jones and Davis (1965), in their theory of correspondent inferences, argue that an actor who behaves in contrast to situational demands would reflect his personal disposition. Thus, the causes of behavior would be attributed to internal factors. Harvey (1976), in his notion of perceived freedom, argues that an actor is responsible for a behavior when he is

perceived as having more freedom in taking an action. In this case, an observer of behavior would attribute the causes of behavior to internal factors. On the contrary, an actor who has less freedom in his action due to situational pressures would be perceived as less responsible to the action. An observer who perceives the actor's behavior in this case would attribute the causes of behavior to external factors.

In relation to the evaluation of immoral behavior, attribution theory seems to provide a useful framework of analysis. Ross and DiTicco (1975) suggest that if a person is to be evaluated as morally good or bad on the basis of some behavior, he must be perceived as responsible for the behavior. An actor's responsibility for the behavior, according to Kelley's (1972) hypothesis, is inversely related to the degree to which external factors are perceived to be determinants of behavior. Following this line of thought, it is expected that any immoral behavior which is perceived as caused by internal factors will be evaluated more negatively than if the behavior is seen as elicited by external factors. Literature in the domain of attribution theory seems to support this idea. For example, Carroll and Payne (1977) requested college students and expert parole decision makers to evaluate crime reports. Each crime report consisted of one of eight crime descriptions (e.g. murder, robbery, larceny), and one of eight types of background information designed to suggest whether the behavior was caused by internal factors or external factors. The results showed that the student subjects' judgments supported the attributional framework. Attribution to causes internal to offenders led to a generally more negative evaluation of the crimes (e.g. more serious, longer prison term for the crimes).

One variable which may determine whether a behavior is attributed to internal or external factor is the motive behind the behavior. In pointing out the influence of motive in attribution, Kelley (1972) hypothesizes that more responsibility is attributed to the

person for his actions taken for gain than for similar actions to prevent loss or to avoid punishment. Presumably in actions taken for gain an actor is perceived to have more freedom in taking the action than if the action is for avoiding loss. In support to the hypothesis, Kelley (1972) cited findings by deCharms, Carpenter, and Kupperman (1965). In this study, subjects were asked to describe the freedom an army man had in responding to his commanding officer's demand for extra-guard duty. When the agent making the request was someone the actor liked, the subjects attributed greater freedom to the actor than when the agent was disliked. Possibly in the case of liked agent, the actor wanted to please the agent. Therefore, he was perceived as having more freedom in his action, while in the case of disliked agent the only choice the actor had was to avoid punishment.

If an actor is more responsible for an action taken for gain than an action taken to avoid loss (Kelley, 1972), then it is expected that any immoral behavior under the gain motive would be evaluated more negatively than a behavior with a loss avoidance motive. Kruglanski and Yinon's findings (cited in Kelley, 1972) provide partial support for this idea. In Kruglanski and Yinon's study, an athlete was portrayed as violating the ethics of his profession, either to enable him to improve his economic circumstances or to prevent it from deterioration. The results indicated that most individuals were expected to act unethically in order to prevent loss, but most were expected to resist temptation if gain were involved. It was also found that the violation of ethical rules was less negatively evaluated in the prevent loss than in the improve condition. Presumably in the avoid loss condition the subjects made an external attribution in which the actor was perceived as having less freedom in his action due to the pressure of economic deterioration. In contrast, in the improve condition the actor was perceived as behaving under his own free-will which reflected his immoral personal dispositions (internal attribution).

The attribution process of immoral behavior presumably will be similar to the attribution process of other behaviors. It has been found by several studies in areas other than immoral behavior that several variables may influence the attribution of causes of behavior. One important variable which is frequently found to be influential in the attribution process is the sex variable (e.g. Deaux and Taynor, 1973; Feldman Summer and Kiesler, 1974). Deaux (1976) contends that there are three areas in which the sex variable has proved to be critical in the attribution process: (a) sex as a characteristic of the object being perceived, (b) sex as a characteristic of the observer, and (c) sex as a defining characteristic of the task. Deaux (1976) assumes that when an observer perceives a behavior performed by an actor two general types of information will be used in making an explanation of the causes of behavior. The first type of information is the observed behavior and the actor who performs the behavior. This information is then evaluated together with a second set of information, the expectancies which the observer has for the behavior of the actor. There has been empirical evidence indicating that the way people react to an immoral behavior depends upon the sex of the actor who performs the behavior and the sex of the observer. Bleda, Bleda, and White (1976) reported that sex of the actor and sex of the observer were found to be influential in eliciting the observer's desire to report an immoral behavior. In their study, a female actor engaging in cheating behavior was reported more often than a male actor. One plausible explanation for this phenomenon is that the expectation is stronger that males would engage in immoral behavior. Cavan and Ferdinand (1975, p. 218) showed that boys engaged in delinquent behavior far more often than girls. With the assumption that immoral behavior is more common in males than females, it is predicted that female actor's immoral behavior would be evaluated more negatively than male actor's immoral behavior. This prediction is based on the theory of correspondent

inferences (Jones and Davis, 1965) that an actor behaving in contrast to society's expectation would reflect his or her personal dispositions.

With regard to the role of sex as the characteristic of the observer, it is expected that males and females would be different in their evaluation of immoral behavior. Hoffman (1975) found that the control agent which inhibits immoral behavior in males and females is different. Females avoid doing immoral behavior because of guilt feeling (internal control), while for males the reason is fear of being caught (external control). Females will avoid immoral behavior even though they know that nobody will catch them, while males will avoid such behavior only if somebody might catch them.

Hoffman's findings suggest that females internally are more moral than males. Presumably this is the reason why more female subjects as compared to male subjects reported the immoral behavior in the Bleda, Bleda, and White's (1976) study. Following this rationale, the present study predicted that females subjects will evaluate immoral behavior more negatively than male subjects.

Regarding the sex as a defining characteristic of the behavior, the preparatory study of the present experiment found that immoral behaviors could be sex-typed. For example, shoplifting, gossiping, and falsifying children's ages were perceived as female-typed behaviors. Falsifying income tax, cheating on exams, and stealing company supplies were classified as male-typed behaviors. The present author is not aware of any study aimed at investigating how people evaluate immoral behavior in relation to its sex linkage. However, based on the assumption that females are expected to do female typed behavior, and males to behave as males, it is reasonable to predict that an actor engaging in the opposite sex-typed immoral behavior would be evaluated more negatively than if the behavior is of one's own sex-typing. This prediction is in line with the prediction of the theory correspondent inference (Jones and Davis, 1965) that an out of role behavior would better

reflect actor's personal dispositions.

Another variable which has been shown to be influential in attribution process is achievement motivation (e.g. Feldman-Sumner and Kiesler, 1975; Weiner and Kukla, 1973). McClelland and Winter (1963, p. 23) suggest that one characteristic of individuals with high achievement motivation is the motivation to achieve an excellent performance rather than money, prestige, or power. Related to the present experiment, it is predicted that immoral behavior with the motive of gaining will be evaluated more negatively by the high achievement motivation subjects than by the low achievement motivation subjects, since for the high achievement motivation subjects gaining something by immoral means will not satisfy the need to be excellent. In the avoiding loss condition it is expected that the high achievement motivation subjects will evaluate the immoral behavior in the same way as the low achievement motivation subjects. The rationale behind this expectancy is that in the avoiding loss condition the goal of the behavior is a relief from situational pressures. Not performing the behavior means not achieving something for the high achievement motivation subjects.

In summary the predictions of present study are (1). immoral behavior performed under gain motive will be evaluated more negatively than the immoral behavior under the loss avoidance motive. (2). immoral behavior performed by female actors will be evaluated more negatively than immoral behavior performed by male actor, (3) the immoral behavior of actors who perform the opposite sex-typed behavior will be evaluated more negatively than the immoral behavior of actors performing one's own sex-typed behavior, (4) female observers will evaluate immoral behavior more negatively than male observers, (5) immoral behavior under gain motive will be evaluated more negatively by high achievement motivation subjects than by low achievement motivation subjects, while immoral behavior under the loss avoidance motive will be evaluated in the

same way by high and low achievement motivation subjects.

### METHOD

#### Experimental design

A 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 mixed model factorial design was utilized, involving sex of observer (male vs. female), achievement motivation of observer (high vs. low), motive of actor's behavior (gain vs. loss), sex of actor (male vs. female), and sex-typing of behavior (male vs. female). The first two classifications were between group factors, whereas the other three variables involved repeated measures on the same subjects.

#### Subjects

Eighty eight Indiana University students enrolled in the introductory psychology course participated in the experiment as partial fulfillment of the course requirement. Half of the subjects were male and half were female. In the final data analysis four subjects were excluded because of failure to complete the evaluation or the Mehrabian Achievement Motivation Scale. The excluded subjects were two females and two males.

#### Apparatus

A booklet containing eight stories of people engaging in immoral behavior was used in the experiment. The stories represented three variables: motive of actor's behavior, sex of the actor, and the sex-type of the behavior. Four stories depicted immoral behaviors with the motive of gain, the other four with the motive of avoiding loss. The actors of the stories were male in four stories, and female in the other four. The sex-type of behavior was male in four stories, and in the other four was female-type. The classification of stories as male or female sex-type was based on a pretest. In the pretest, a questionnaire containing 40 kinds of immoral behavior was used. Ninety subjects rated the likelihood of each behavior being performed by a male

or female actor. Subjects were also asked to rate the severity of each immoral behavior presented in the questionnaire. The eight stories used in the booklet were chosen based on the sex-type of behavior and the equality of severity.

The eight stories in the booklet had the following characteristics: (a) gain motive, male-typed behavior, male actor; (b) gain motive, male-typed behavior, female actor; (c) gain motive, female-typed behavior, male actor; (d) gain motive, female-typed behavior, female actor; (e) loss avoidance motive, male-typed behavior, male actor; (f) loss avoidance motive, male-typed behavior, female actor; (g) loss avoidance motive, female-typed behavior, male actor; (h) loss avoidance motive, female-typed behavior, female actor. The stories were counter-balanced by rotating the combination of the three variables. This resulted in four types of booklet. The procedure of counterbalancing was as follows: the combination of gain motive, male-typed behavior, male actor in the booklet type I was changed into a combination of gain motive, female-typed behavior, male actor in the booklet type II, gain motive, male-typed behavior, female actor in the booklet type III, and gain motive, female-typed behavior, female actor in the booklet type IV. In order to eliminate order effects, the arrangement of stories in each booklet was randomized.

Here is an example of each of the stories:

#### Gain motive, male-typed behavior, male actor

Charlie was an undergraduate student majoring in psychology. He needed to pass one more course to finish his B.A. program. After finishing his undergraduate degree he planned to continue his studies in a graduate school. He wanted to pass his examination at an excellent level in order to gain admission and scholarship to graduate school. Therefore he sent another person who could easily pass the exam to take the exam in his place.

#### Loss-avoidance motive, male-typed behavior, female actor

Charlotte was an undergraduate student majoring in psychology. She needed to pass one more course to finish her B.A. program. If she failed in that course she would be terminated by the Department without gaining a B.A. degree. It would mean the money and time she spent for study would have meant nothing. She worried about that; therefore, she sent another person who could easily pass the exam to take the exam in her place.

#### Gain motive, female-typed behavior, male actor

Paul was an employee in a small company. He was bored at his present position, and he wanted a promotion for a better salary. Since the company was small, the rate of promotion was slow. The only possible way to be promoted was if a higher ranked employee left the job. A few days ago there was a vacant job in a higher position. This vacant job provided a promotion chance for Paul and one of his office-mates. In order to be promoted, Paul gossiped about his officemate's immoral conduct. By so doing he hoped he would get the promotion.

#### Loss-avoidance motive, female-typed behavior, female actor

Pauline was an employee in a small company. She worried about losing her job, since the company had planned to reduce the number of employees. It was difficult to find another job during that time. She was informed that one of the employees in her office would be let go. In order to remain in her job, she gossiped about the immoral conduct of her officemate. By so doing she hoped that she would not lose her job.

Following each story, two 11-point scales were presented.

One was for rating actor's responsibility for the behavior, and the other for evaluating the negativity of behavior. The range of scale values was from 0 (not responsible/not negative at all) to 10 (very responsible/very negative). Since there were 88 subjects and four types of booklet, 22 booklets of each type were used.

To measure the subjects' levels of achievement motivation, a questionnaire measure of individual differences in the achievement tendency (Mehrabian and Bank, 1978) was administered. This questionnaire was attached at the back cover of each booklet.

#### Procedure

The experiment was carried out in groups of ten to thirty subjects. All subjects participating in each session were seated in a classroom. After giving an introductory remark, the experimenter distributed the booklets to the subjects. Since there were four types of booklets, the one presented to each subject was selected randomly. After distributing the booklets to all subjects, the experimenter read the instructions printed in the front cover of each booklet. The instructions were as follows: "On the following pages you will find some short stories. Each story describes a person engaging in some particular behavior. Please read the stories carefully, and on the basis of the information presented in each story indicate your personal judgment about the actor's responsibility for the behavior and negativity of the behavior by circling the appropriate number on the scales following each story." The subjects also were instructed to fill out the questionnaire measuring achievement motivation after completing the evaluation of the stories. At the end of the experiment, the experimenter explained the purpose of the study and thanked the subjects for participating in the experiment.

## RESULTS

### Form effects

In order to know whether or not the use of four different types of booklets led to different effects, a one-way analysis of variance was performed. The scores of eight stories in each booklet were lumped together representing a single score for each booklet. There were 21 booklets of each type were used. The results showed that there was no significant effect of the form ( $F = .028$ ,  $df = 3, 20$ ,  $p > .50$ ).

### Achievement motivation

Scores of achievement motivation from male and female subjects were treated separately. To classify the subjects' level of achievement motivation, a median split for each sex was used. Subjects who scored above the median were classified as having high achievement motivation, while subjects who scored below the median were classified as low in achievement motivation. The comparison between male and female subjects' score indicated that male subjects were higher in achievement motivation than female subjects ( $t = 4.407$ ,  $df = 1, 20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding lends support for the argument that males have higher achievement motivation scores than females (e.g. Mehrabian and Bank, 1978).

### Treatment effects

There were two dependent measures in this experiment. One was the responsibility of the actor for the immoral behaviors. The other was the negativity of the immoral behaviors. To analyze the data of each dependent measure, a mixed-model-five-way analysis of variance (Dayton, 1970) was performed. Table 1. presents the result of analysis for the responsibility of the actor, and Table 2. for the negativity of behavior.

Source	df	SS	MS	F
<b>BETWEEN</b>				
D (subjects' sex)	1	44.537	44.537	1.148
E (ach. motiv.)	1	2.501	2.501	.064
D X E	1	4.18	4.18	.108
S (subjects)	80	3104.245	38.803	
<b>WHITIN</b>				
A (motive)	1	17.03	17.03	2.358
A X D	1	.43	.43	.059
A X E	1	15.788	15.788	2.358
A X D X E	1	.787	.787	.109
A X S	80	557.875	7.223	
<b>B (sex-type of behavior)</b>				
B X D	1	4.842	4.842	1.969
B X D X E	1	4.828	4.828	1.963
B X S	80	.794	.794	.323
C (actor)	1	196.708	2.459	
C X D	1	4.501	4.501	1.530
C X E	1	3.871	3.871	1.316
C X D X E	1	.252	.252	.086
C X S	80	5.537	5.537	1.883
A X B	1	235.256	2.941	
A X B X D	1	.173	.173	.0268
A X B X E	1	.127	.127	.02
A X B X D X E	1	4.507	4.507	.699
A X B X S	80	3.567	3.567	.553
A X C	1	515.793	6.447	
A X C X D	1	.657	.657	.174
A X C X E	1	.251	.251	.066
A X C X D X E	1	4.5	4.5	1.19
A X C X S	1	1.086	1.086	.287
B X C	1	302.673	3.783	
B X C X D	1	17.673	17.673	2.459
B X C X E	1	2.27	2.27	.316
B X C X D X E	1	3.579	3.579	.498
B X C X S	80	.114	.114	.016
A X B X C	1	575.034	7.188	
A X B X C X D	1	.663	.663	.23
A X B X C X E	1	5.531	5.531	1.912
A X B X C X D X E	1	.33	.33	.114
A X B X C X S	80	1.257	1.257	.434
A X B X C X S	80	231.469	2.893	

Table 1.

Table 2. Summary of ANOVA for the negativity

Source	df	SS	MS	F		
<b>Between</b>						
D (Subjects' sex)	1	29.163	29.163	1.167	Sig. p	.005
E (Ach. motiv.)	1	210.337	210.337	8.418		
D X E	1	.596	.596	.024		
S (subjects)	80	1999.444	24.99			
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<b>WITHIN</b>						
A (motive)	1	97.52	97.52	18.393	Sig. p	.001
A X D	1	12.602	12.602	2.337		
A X E	1	6.882	6.882	1.298		
A X D X E	1	.094	.094	.0178		
A X S	80	424.152	5.302			
B (sex-type of behavior)	1	.05	.05	.007	Sig. p	.10
B X D	1	7.298	7.298	1.035		
B X E	1	2.15	2.15	.305		
B X D X E	1	2.264	2.264	.372		
B X S	80	564.128	7.051			
C (actor)	1	14.29	14.28	2.889		
C X D	1	9.055	9.055	1.831		
C X E	1	.481	.481	.097		
C X D X E	1	.725	.725	.146		
C X S	80	395.699	4.946			
A X B	1	12.057	12.057	3.995	Sig. p	.05
A X B X D	1	3.14	3.14	1.04		
A X B X E	1	3.51	3.51	1.044		
A X B X D X E	1	.483	.483	.160		
A X B X S	80	241.419	3.018			
A X C	1	.484	.484	.065		
A X C X D	1	5.716	5.716	.771		
A X C X E	1	5.01	5.01	.676		
A X C X D X E	1	.287	.287	.039		
A X C X S	80	592.753	7.409			
B X C	1	1.525	1.525	.312		
B X C X D	1	3.425	3.425	.312		
B X C X E	1	4.028	4.028	.825		
B X C X D X E	1	.59	.59	.121		
B X C X S	80	390.682	4.883			
A X B X C	1	.094	.094	.041		
A X B X C X D	1	1.53	1.53	.674		
A X B X C X E	1	.088	.088	.039		
A X B X C X D X E	1	.005	.005	.002		
A X B X C X S	80	181.573	2.27			

The result of analysis of variance on the responsibility of the actor on the behavior demonstrated that there was no significant effect of the experimental variables on the way the subjects assigned responsibility to the actor. Most subjects, regardless their level of achievement motivation and sex, perceived the actor as being very responsible to the immoral behavior.

The analysis of variance on the negativity of the immoral behavior yielded several significant effects. The significant findings involved only the main effect of achievement motivation ( $F = 8.418$ ,  $df = 1, 80$ ;  $p < .005$ ), the motive of behavior ( $F = 18.393$ ,  $df = 1, 80$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and the interaction between motive and sex-type of behavior ( $F = 3.995$ ;  $df = 1, 80$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There was a marginally significant main effect of the actor's sex ( $F = 2.889$ ;  $df = 1, 80$ ;  $p < .10$ ). The significant main effect of achievement motivation, where the high achievement motivation subjects evaluated the behaviors more negatively ( $\bar{X} = 7.89$ ) than the low achievement motivation subjects ( $\bar{X} = 6.77$ ) was in line with the prediction that high achievement motivation subjects would evaluate immoral behaviors under the gain motive more negatively than the low achievement motivation subjects. The highly significant main effect for motive of behavior ( $p < .001$ ) verified the prediction that immoral behavior which was aimed at avoiding loss was less negatively evaluated ( $\bar{X} = 6.95$ ) than behavior aimed at gain ( $\bar{X} = 7.71$ ). There was a significant interaction between the sex-type of the behavior and the motive for that behavior ( $p < .05$ ). In order to understand the nature of interaction, the analysis was followed by *t*-tests (Hays, 1973). The result of these tests showed that male-typed behavior in the gain condition was evaluated more negatively ( $\bar{X} = 7.86$ ) than male-typed behavior in avoiding loss condition ( $\bar{X} = 6.83$ ),  $p < .01$ , while for female-typed behavior there was no significant difference ( $\bar{X} = 7.57$  for gain motive, and  $\bar{X} = 7.07$  for avoiding loss condition,  $p < .20$ ). The marginally significant effect of sex of the actor ( $p < .10$ )

suggest a tendency for female actors to be evaluated more negatively than male actors ( $\bar{X} = 7.50$  for female actor, and  $\bar{X} = 7.19$  for male actor). This finding slightly supports the hypothesis that female actors would be evaluated more negatively than the male actors.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the present study yielded an unexpected finding with regard to the relationship between the degree to which the actor of immoral behavior was held responsible to the behavior, and the negativity of immoral behavior. It was expected that there would be a positive correlation between these two independent measures; that is, as the actor was perceived as more responsible to the behavior, the evaluation of the negativity of behavior would be more negative. One possible explanation for this result is that in evaluating the stories subjects might have perceived the actor as having full control in deciding whether or not to perform the behavior. The actor may have less freedom in taking the action if he or she is under situational pressure. However, once the action has been taken the actor would be held responsible for the action, since he or she has decided to do so. In this case, the information concerning the situational pressures while taking the action is not influential. But, when one asks how negative the actor's behavior is, the information concerning situational pressures may reduce the negativity of evaluation.

More negative evaluations were assigned to immoral behavior when the immoral behavior was performed under the gain motive. The more negative evaluations to behaviors under gain motive indicates that the observer viewed those actor's behaviors as internally motivated. In Harvey's terms, this situation refers to the tendency of perceiver to see the actor as having more freedom in determining his or her behavior. On the contrary, the actor who behaved immorally under the loss avoidance motive was evaluated less negatively. Presumably the actor in this condition was perceived as be-

having under situational pressure that reduced the freedom in taking the action. The perception of having less freedom in taking the action led the observer to infer the causes of behavior to external factors.

Interestingly, the way observers evaluated the negativity of gain versus loss motivated immoral behavior in this experiment was dependent upon the sex-type of immoral behavior. When the behavior was male sex-type typed, observers evaluated the behavior under gain motive more negatively than the behavior for avoiding loss. However, when the behavior was female-sex typed, there was no significant difference in evaluation.

The finding that female actor's behaviors tends to be evaluated more negatively suggests that society tends to be more punitive toward women who engage in immoral behavior. Research findings in the field of personality traits might explain this suggestion. It has been found by some studies (see MacCoby & Jacklin, 1974 for review) that there are differences in the kinds of goals men and women pursue. Men, for example, are more interested in achievement in a competitive situation, while women are more concerned with social approval and social relationships. Presumably the reason why society is more punitive to women behaving immorally is society's expectation that women should be more concerned with social approval. From this view, doing an immoral behavior will lead to the loss of social approval which is the main concern for women.

Overall, the finding that high achievement motivation subjects rated the immoral behaviors more negatively than the low achievement motivation subjects is in line with predictions. In the gain-motive condition, the high-achievement-motivation subjects evaluated the immoral behavior more negatively than the low-achievement motivation subjects ( $\bar{X} = 8.34$  for high achievement motivation subjects, and  $\bar{X} = 7.06$  for low achievement,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, if we look at the data in the loss avoidance condition, the high achievement subjects also evaluated

the behavior more negatively ( $\bar{X} = 7.40$ ) than the low achievement motivation subjects ( $\bar{X} = 6.49$ ). This result was significant ( $p = 0.01$ ). This pattern of findings is in contrast to the prediction. It was expected that in the loss-avoidance condition, the high-achievement-motivation subjects would evaluate the behavior on the same way as the low achievement motivation subjects. From attribution theory's viewpoint this result might be interpreted as an indication that the high achievement motivation subjects tend to see the actor as having more internal control, while the low achievement motivation subjects perceived the actor as having less internal control. This kind of perception may be elicited by a self projection of one's own personality characteristics, since it has been found in some studies (e.g. Feldman Summers and Kiesler, 1974) that high achievement motivation subjects tend to see themselves as having more control of their own behavior.

The prediction that female subjects would evaluate immoral behavior more negatively than male subjects was not supported by the data. This finding is in contrast to the findings by Bleda, Bleda, & White (1976), and by Hoffman (1975). One possible reason for this inconsistent finding is the nature of the task. In the present study the subjects were asked to make moral judgments, while in the studies by Bleda, Bleda, & White (1976), and by Hoffman (1975), the subjects were directly involved in moral behavior.

The other prediction that was not supported in the present study was the expectation that the subjects would evaluate the actor engaging in the opposite-sex-typed-immoral-behavior more negatively than the actor performing the same-sex-typed-immoral behavior. The data indicated that there was no interaction between sex of the actor and the sex-typed immoral behavior. Possibly this result was caused by the very negative reaction toward immoral behavior, so that the sex of the actor and the sex-type of immoral behavior become less salient.

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